

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRAZZAVILLE 0340

FRANKFURT PLEASE PASS CONGRESSMAN DIGGS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (DIGGS, REP. CHARLES), PFOR, CF, CU, US
SUBJECT: CODEL DIGGS: VISIT OF CONGRESSMAN DIGGS --D-MICH.) TO
BRAZZAVILLE, MARCH 30.

1. REPRESENTATIVE DIGGS, ACCOMPANIED BY DR. HERSCHELLE CHALLENGER
AND DEPARTMENT OFFICER LANPHER, VISITED BRAZZAVILLE MARCH 30.
CONGRESSMAN DIGGS MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER OBENGA, PRESIDENTIAL
POLITICAL ADVISOR EKONDY, MFA SYG IKOUEBE, AND CONGOLESE LABOR
PARTY OFFICIAL FEVILIYE-MBIMPA.

2. DURING FIRST MEETING, WITH MFA SYG IKOUEBE, REPRESENTATIVE
DIGGS DESCRIBED HIS LONG STANDING INTEREST IN AFRICA AND HIS ROLE
IN ENCOURAGING BOTH THE US CONGRESS AND PEOPLE TO PLAY THEIR ROLE
IN IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF AFRICA AND AMERICA.
HE RELATED TO IKOUEBE THE ITINERARY WHICH HE WAS FOLLOWING, WHICH
WAS ENABLING HIM TO HAVE FIRST HAND CONTACT WITH LEADERS AND THE
PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE AREA ADJACENT TO THE VERY VOLA-
TILE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IKOUEBE, IN TURN, TOLD REP-
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REPRESENTATIVE DIGGS OF HIS DEEP SATISFACTION WITH THE CHANGE IN
AMERICAN VIEWS TOWARD AFRICA WHICH WAS REPRESENTED BY PRESIDENT
CARTER AND HIS ADMINISTRATION. THIS IS RESPONSIVE TO AFRICA'S
WISH AND, ALSO CONGO IS A SMALL COUNTRY AND GOES ALONG WITH OAU
POSITIONS IN GENERAL, IT DOES HAVE STRONG VIEWS CONCERNING THE
SITUATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN PARTICULAR. CONGO SUPPORTS THE
PATRIOTIC FRONT, AS SHOWN IN RECENT GOCB COMMUNIQUE (BRAZZAVILLE

0322 NOTAL). ALTHOUGH CONGO BELIEVED THAT ARMED STRUGGLE WAS NECESSARY IN ZIMBABWE, IT WOULD NATURALLY PREFER THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS AND, THEREFORE, WAS SYMPATHETIC CONCERNING US EFFORTS. IKOUEBE TOLD CONGRESSMAN DIGGS THAT CONGOLESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE WERE WELL AWARE THAT DIGGS HAD VISITED CONGO DURING A PERIOD WHEN OUR EMBASSY WAS CLOSED AND THAT THE CONGRESSMAN HAD BEEN ONE OF THOSE IN WASHINGTON LONG FAVORING A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. IKOUEBE CHARACTERIZED PRESENT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AS "VERY, VERY GOOD," AND HOPED THAT OUR COOPERATION WOULD EXPAND. HE INDICATED THAT MANY CONGOLESE DID NOT UNDERSTAND FULLY HOW CONGO COULD BE GOOD FRIEND WITH BOTH WESTERN AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. IN ORDER NOT TO FUEL ARGUMENTS OF THOSE HOSTILE TO CONGO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES, IKOUEBE HOPED THAT IN ANY ASSISTANCE PROJECTS WHICH US LAUNCHED HERE, UNCONSCIONABLE PERIOD OF IMPLEMENTATION WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE, ALLOWING OTHERS TO QUESTION OUR SINCERITY. IT WOULD BE BETTER NOT TO HAVE PROJECTS THE STUDY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WHICH DRAGGED ON FOR YEARS.

3. AT LUANCH WITH CHARGE, CONGRESSMAN DIGGS DESCRIBED TO CONGOLESE LABOR PARTY DIRECTOR FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WITH WESTERN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES, FEVILIYE-MBIMPA, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY AMERICANS OF AFRICAN ORIGIN IN THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT AND IN TURN, OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT CONCERNING OUR CHANGING POSITION TOWARD AFRICA. FEVILIYE-MBIMPA DESCRIBED TO REPRESENTATIVE DIGGS THE TRIPARTITE MECHANISM IN CONGOLESE STATE ENTERPRISES, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHEREIN REPRESENTATIVES OF "MANAGEMENT," THE PARTY, AND THE "UNIONS" SETTLE DIFFERENCES.

4. AS REPRESENTATIVE DIGGS ARRIVED AT THE FERRY TO TAKE HIM AND HIS PARTY TO KINSHASA, FOREIGN MINISTER OBENGA AND PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL ADVISOR EKONDY AKALA ARRIVED. THEY HAD BEEN DISPATCHED BY POST HASTE BY PRESIDENT YHOMBY-OPANGO (WHO WAS ENGAGED IN A DAY-LONG MEETING OF FIRST THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THEN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE) TO CONVEY PRESIDENT'S REGRET AT NOT HAVING BEEN ABLE TO RECEIVE DIGGS PERSONALLY. FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED DEEP SATISFACTION THAT CONGRESSMAN DIGGS HAD BEEN TO VISIT CONGO, DESCRIBING DIGGS AS A LONG-TIME FRIEND OF HIS COUNTRY AND VISIT AS MARK OF EXCELLENT RELATIONS WHICH NOW EXIST. OBENGA AND EKONDY RELATED THAT PRESIDENT YHOMBY-OPANGO HAD SPENT LARGE PART OF CABINET AND MILITARY COMMITTEE MEETINGS THAT DAY TO STUDY OF NUMBER OF CUBANS IN CONGO AND ROLE THEY PLAY, HAVING HEARD THAT VARIOUS RUMORS WERE CIRCULATING IN BRAZZAVILLE TO THE EFFECT THAT CUBAN PRESENCE HAD INCREASED CONSIDERABLY. HE EVEN HAD CALLED PRIME MINISTER SYLVAIN-COMA BACK FROM INTERIOR FOR DISCUSSIONS. EKONDY AND OBENGA SAID THAT YHOMBY-OPANGO WANTED USG TO KNOW THAT THERE HAD NOT BEEN AN INCREASE IN CUBAN PRESENCE HERE, THAT "HUG NUMBERS OF CUBANS IN POINTE-NORIE, "WHICH SOME (E.G. FRENCH)

WERE RUMORING IN FACT WERE A COMPANY OF CUBAN SOLDIERS BUILDING A BARRACKS. EKONDY REITERATED THAT CONGO WANTED TO CONTINUE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND WAS NOT BEHOLDING TO CUBANS OR ANYONE ELSE. CONGRESSMAN DIGGS REPLIED THAT HE HIMSELF HAD ALWAYS RECOGNIZED CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA WAS BY INVITATION OF RECEIVING GOVERNMENT, THAT HE BELIEVED CUBANS WERE ASSISTING LIBERATION STRUGGLE, AND THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO REVIEWING THE MATTER SPECIFICALLY WITH FIDEL CASTRO DURING HIS VISIT NEXT WEEK TO HAVANA.

5. ABOVE MESSAGE PREPARED FOLLOWING DEPARTURE FROM BRAZZAVILLE OF REPRESENTATIVE DIGGS AND NOT CLEARED BY CODEL.
KATZEN

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